The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and official interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the federal, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

Entered as second-class matter September 20, 1915, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 31, 1918.

Thru Payroll Savings

WHOLE NO. 1841 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1945 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 35, NO. 52

LABOR, USA

Washington, D. C.—The twenty-fifth edition of the American Federationist of the Air, broadcast on the "Labor, USA" program over the American Broadcasting Company network, included the following outstanding feature articles to supplement the news:

Congress Takes a Holiday

By LEWIS G. HINES
AFL Legislative Representative

You may not believe it, but members of Congress work just as hard as the rest of us. They do enjoy this great advantage, however. They can take a holiday whenever they decide they need one. Apparently, they need one now, because they have voted to recess until January 15. We wish them a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and we hope they will get a good rest. Because they have work cut out for them when they return.

The amount of unfinished business left over by Congress is staggering. President Truman has submitted to Congress in the last few months a comprehensive program dealing with the human needs of all the American people in peacetime. It is no exaggeration to say that Congress has failed utterly to act on practically every part of this program. Not a single one of the "must" measures urgently recommended by the President has been approved.

Let's call the roll. Item No. 1 was the Full Employment bill. The House and the Senate have each adopted a different bill on this subject, but both are disappointing. Representative Matthew M. Neely of West Virginia aptly described the House bill when he said:

"This bill is no more like a Full Employment Bill than the jackass in the lion's skin was like the king of beasts which the skin had originally adorned."

Then take Item No. 2—the Unemployment Compensation Bill. The Senate passed a watered-down version of what the President recommended and the nation badly needs, but the House Ways and Means Committee has buried the entire subject in a pigeon hole.

Item No. 3 is being subjected to slow death by delay. It is the new Minimum Wage Bill. The Senate Committee postponed further hearings until late in January and the House hasn't shown even that much interest.

Item No. 4 affects your health and mine. It is the Health Insurance Bill. Except for a few progressive leaders, Congress has thus far turned a deaf ear to this badly needed measure which would make the best medical care available to all the American people on a sound insurance basis.

I could go on with this list to far greater extent if time permitted, but I think the point is clear. If Congress could do no better than the record of its last session, it certainly needs a vacation. We hope that when the members of Congress go to their homes they will hear from you on these subjects and come back determined to fulfill the requirements of the American people.

When Does the War End?

By JOSEPH A. PADWAY
Chief Counsel for the AFL

The American people thought the war ended last August when Japan surrendered. But, from a legal aspect, the war emergency is still going on—and Congress has just extended it until June 30, 1946 by adopting legislation continuing the President's emergency authority under the Second War Powers Act until that date.

Now this is an exceedingly strange situation—and a dangerous one—but in some respects it just can't be helped.

For instance, if war-time controls over prices, rents and scarce materials were to be suddenly removed now, chairman Chester Bowles of the Senate Schwellenbach told a Congressional Committee this week that if price ceilings were abolished the cost of living would burst right through the roof. Well, every city in the nation knows that. A price shortage of lumber, would go wild if controls were taken off at this time. As to materials, we have just experienced a startling example in the construction industry. The President was forced to impose some limited controls over building materials after they had been removed, because the scarce supply was not being used for the nation's most urgent need—low-cost housing. Therefore, no matter how unfortunate, disagreeable and annoying it may be, we must resign ourselves to the necessity of continuing on a war-time footing a little while longer.

But in some cases it is vitally important to abolish war powers without further delay. This is notably true of the Connally-Smith Act, which was supposed to outlaw strikes during the war but instead, instead to encourage them. Fortunately, Congress has recognized its own error and has refused to extend the National War Labor Boards to handle its funds for conducting strike votes as the Connally-Smith Act provides. The American Federation of Labor is convinced that the other obnoxious provisions of the ill-conceived law also should be repealed at once. Until this is done, it will be difficult to resume orderly, cooperative relations between management and labor.

The basic danger is the indefinite continuation of wartime restrictions upon the American people during peacetime. The basic need of our country is to get readjusted to peacetime as soon as possible. The basic remedy is prompt production in full quantity of the essential supplies which America needs for decent living.

We urge President Truman to encourage this policy and to relinquish war-time emergency controls as soon as that can be done with safety.

Home Again Blues

By BORIS SHISHKIN
AFL Economist

"Home by Christmas!" "Home by New Year's!" "Home by Easter!"... American fighters 'round the world are making plans, building up hopes.

Home is the most important thing to them.

So far, only 40 percent of our armed forces have been demobilized. More are on the way. They are not alone in being homward bound. Millions of war workers who have moved to war production centers to fill emergency jobs are again on the move—either to where they lived before the war, or looking for new homes in other states where they hope to get steady, peacetime jobs. They, too, are going home.

Going home! What home? Our towns and cities are so crowded that they are spilling up and down the country right at their gates. From coast to coast, cities are bursting at their seams.

Millions are being told: "Sorry, but there is no room. No, nothing today. Or tomorrow. Or, perhaps, for a couple of years." The only thing to do is to double up. Crowd in with relatives or with strangers. Live miserably but be thankful for a roof.

The housing crisis is upon us with its whole crushing, monstrous force. It did not come as a surprise. All through the war, labor called for advance planning and advance building to meet this coming problem. But the voice was ignored. The voice that was heard and heeded, was the voice of the speculator and the profiteer. Last August, just when the postwar housing emergency began to loom large, the government began to remove priorities and other emergency means with which the crisis could be met. The result was a quick boom in building materials, which desperately short. These went to build, not what was most needed, but what was most profitable: night clubs, juke joints, beauty parlors, stores, but not houses.

This week the government decided to put emergency controls back on. But this will help neither the veteran nor the worker. The new program is just the wrong kind. It is not for people with modest means. It will direct half of the available material into building $10,000 houses. And the other half it can still be used for building night clubs, juke joints, beauty parlors and 40-room mansions.

That's how Reconversion Director John Snyder's new plan will work. How many veterans and how many workers, can afford a $10,000 luxury home? Labor has asked that 70 percent of available materials be allocated to build low and moderate-priced homes. The war asked that 80 percent of materials be used to build plants, hospitals and other essential construction. Labor's temporary, emergency proposal makes sense to most people. But Mr. Snyder said—"No."

Congress has just authorized another emergency program to make available barracks, Quonset huts and trailers coming from the war front for a few thousand veterans' families. This stop-gap program is pitifully small, even for today. And what of tomorrow? The real answer, the full answer and the permanent answer is a many-sided, long-range, peacetime program embodied in the Wagner-Taft bill. It will make possible large-scale construction of privately-built new houses for families of all incomes. It will give veterans preference for low-priced homes. If you want a new postwar home at a modest price for your family, ask your Congressman to support the Wagner-Taft General Housing Bill, S. 1592. Write him a postcard now!

GREEN URGES DONATIONS TO CLOTHING COLLECTION

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green appealed to all AFL members in a Christmas message to solicit the support the Victory Clothing Drive which is trying to collect 100 million new and old garments for distribution among the millions of destitute war victims of Europe and Asia. He also urged that each donor write a letter with his gift.

"Your letter, my dear friend," Mr. Green said, "will again demonstrate very clearly the deep-rooted desire of AFL men and women to establish friendly bonds between themselves and the working men and women all over the world."

Right To Scan Books Vital In Pay Cases, Truman Rules

Gov't Workers Get Meager Wage Boost From Senate

Washington, D. C.—The United States Senate voted an average 11 percent increase in the pay of government employes receiving less than $10,000 a year and rejected the Downey bill which would have provided the 20 percent increase urged by President Truman and the American Federation of Labor.

AFL unions representing government workers immediately served notice that they regarded the relatively small pay boost as inadequate and comes up for consideration in the House of Representatives late in January.

Meanwhile, the AFL Council of Government Employes Unions will conduct a vigorous campaign to enlist the support of members of Congress for a more adequate wage bill, including pay increases for Representatives and Senators.

The Senate substitute was sponsored by Senator Harry Byrd, of Virginia, who has a long record of obstruction against lifting the standards of federal employes. In the name of economy, Senator Byrd has fought practically every measure which would give Uncle Sam's army of public servants a break.

The measure adopted by the Senate grants higher percentage increases to those in the lower income brackets and scales down the increase for those in the higher brackets.

N. Y. Hotels Sign Model Contract; AFL Union Wins Great Advances

New York City.—A new contract raising the pay scales of 25,000 workers employed in 140 of the city's hotels from 25 to 40 percent was signed between the Hotel Association of New York and the New York Hotel Trades Council, American Federation of Labor.

The union said present payrolls amounted to more than $30,000,000 annually. The employers estimated that the new rates would increase this amount to more than $46,000,000.

The signing ceremonies took place in the offices of Edward P. Mulrooney, former police chairman in the hotel industry, at 41 East Fifty-seventh Street. The association was represented by Fred O. Cosgrove, its newly elected president, and the union by Jay Brill, president of the council.

The contract covers all but three of the leading hotels. The exceptions are the Waldorf-Astoria, for which the union only recently won bargaining rights; the Lexington, where negotiations are currently in progress, and the Hotel Governor Clinton.

Besides the wage increases the new contract, which runs until May 31, 1946, contains a no-strike, no-lockout provision; extension of paid vacations up to two weeks, based on length of service; four holidays off with pay or the alternative of double time; a joint employment agency to combat fee-charging agencies; continuation of health and accident insurance paid by the employers; and a clause barring discrimination because of race, creed, color or national origin.

The wage provisions were made retroactive to June 1, representing lump sum payments which an RFC that the employes will get on the eve of the Christmas holidays.

Mr. Cosgrove said the agreement gave the industry "a great feeling of comfort" and Mr. Mulrooney hailed it "a model relationship for the hotel industry of the nation."

The length of the work week remains the same as in the previous contract, 48 hours for most employes, 54 for waiters, and 45 for women and employes under 21.

17 AFL Unions Tender Testimonial To Rep. Ramspeck, Friend of Labor

Washington, D. C.—Members of Congress, executives of federal agencies and representatives of 17 AFL unions paid tribute to 16 years of public service of Representative Robert Ramspeck (D. Ga.) at a testimonial luncheon at the Statler Hotel.

In a letter, President Truman credited Ramspeck with a large share in the task of strengthening the efficiency in public service during the 16 years he headed the House Committee on Civil Service.

Ramspeck leaves the House January 3 to accept the position of vice president of the Air Transport Association of America at a reported $25,000 salary.

For more than two hours, speakers, including Majority Leader Congressman John W. McCormack (D., Mass.), and AFL President William Green, lauded Ramspeck for his leadership and steadying influence in the Congress, as well as his fairness and wisdom as a friend of labor.

Mr. Green emphasized that if pay standards for federal employes, including members of Congress, had been raised to proper levels, the government would not have to lose faithful and efficient public servants, such as Ramspeck.

A scroll, citing Ramspeck's sponsorship of the Hatch Act, the Ramspeck-Mead-Ramspeck Act, the liberalized Retirement Act, the Hobbs Act, the Lea Act and the Federal Employes Pay Act of 1945, was presented in the names of the AFL unions sponsoring the testimonial dinner.

This scroll expressed the appreciation of the group for the "non-partisan government employes' associations" for Ramspeck's "outstanding services."

McCormack, House Speaker Sam Rayburn (D., Texas) and Rep. Clare Boothe Luce, also spoke.

Ramspeck accepted also a gift program containing a $1000 Victory Bond, bought by the sponsoring unions, and a scroll from Local 4 of the Bookbinders Union.

Schwellenbach Warns Cost of Living May Pierce Roof When Controls End

Washington, D. C.—Removal of price and rent controls would boost the cost of living through the roof and create a "very grave" situation as to wages, Secretary of Labor Schwellenbach told Congress.

"Until supplies are really adequate, it is important to hold controls not only over prices, but over wages in some cases," he told the Senate Small Business Committee.

A "big profits" lobby has been pressuring Congress for removal of controls, now, he said, before farmers have undertaken an all-out campaign to retain rent ceilings.

Labor is confronted with a reconversion problem on a very large scale.

"We need to continue price control."

Schwellenbach declared that if America is to avoid being faced with a rise in prices month after month, "industrial unrest will inevitably increase."

Wages in heavy industries already are down to $44.50 weekly from $52.90 in April, 1945, just before the end of war in Europe, the Secretary said. Workers in light industries are receiving an average of approximately $38 now, representing a decline of only 75 cents from April.

But even where the decline has been slight, he related, family income on an average have dropped because fewer persons are employed now than last spring. Government employment alone has declined 270,000 since mid-August.

"With such a situation as this," said Schwellenbach, "we should cannot afford to allow prices of living essentials to go up any more. Most of all we cannot permit rents to run wild.

"I do not want to conjure up any imaginary dangers. These dangers are very real indeed. They begin with the simple fact that there are shortages of many kinds of goods. If price and rent controls are removed, the cost of living would go through the roof within six months."

Everyday goods which consumers buy are now $2.5 percent above the prewar level, Schwellenbach continued, and even with continuation of controls there is no decline in the cost of living soon.

Because food and clothing continue in short supply, prices paid for them will remain as high as the government permits.

"You can imagine," he said, "what would happen to the prices of the few shirts that do come into retail stores if this government were to say to the retailers and manufacturers, now or in June, 'price control is off and you can charge anything you please.'"

Decision Widens Power of Fact-Finding Boards In Disputes

Washington, D. C.—President Truman bluntly ruled that government fact-finding boards considering wage disputes must have authority to examine employers' books in order to determine their ability to pay increases in wage rates.

The President's decision was contained in a victory for employes of labor which has always maintained that the company's ability to pay is one of the key questions in collective bargaining on wages.

However, the President threw a sop to employers when he included a proviso that the information contained in a company's books should not be made public in order to protect it from prying competitors.

AFL unions with a long history of successful collective bargaining have established procedures under which company data on earnings and profits are considered at the bargaining table but are not broadcast to the rest of the world.

The new wrinkle in the present situation was whether a government fact-finding board appointed by the President to seek a solution when collective bargaining breaks down should have authority, without subpoena power, to examine an employer's books.

The fact-finding boards now functioning have been appointed by the President without specific authority from Congress and cannot issue subpoenas. Only CIO cases are as yet involved. The President's request for legislation giving such boards statutory authority has been rebuffed by Congress which postponed hearings on the Norton-Ellender bill until late in January.

In a formal statement issued at a White House press conference, the President outlined his views as follows:

"In appointing a fact-finding board in an industrial dispute where one of the questions at issue is wages, it is essential to a full hearing of all that the board have the authority, whenever it deems it necessary, to examine the books of the employer. That authority is essential to enable the board to determine the ability of the employer to pay an increase in wages where such ability is in question. Ability to pay is always one of the facts relevant to the issue of an increase in wages.

"This does not mean that the government or its fact-finding board is going to guarantee that a rates of return for the employer. It does mean, however, that since wages are paid out of earnings, the question of earnings is relevant.

"The detailed information obtained from the books of the employer should not be made public. Such a disclosure would give his employer at a disadvantage with respect to his competitors. But the fact-finding board should have authority, in its discretion, to examine the employer's books where it deems it necessary in order to enable it to make full study and hear as a demand for increase is justified and to make a full finding based upon such information, that it deems relevant to the controversy.

"That is one of the things I meant when I stated in my message of December 3, 1945, to the Congress:

"The Labor Department . . . is directed to make a thorough investigation of all the facts which it deems relevant in the controversy."

"This is nothing new. There are many instances where the books of corporations are opened for inspection to representatives of the state and federal governments and where the information so obtained is used solely by such officials to carry out their functions.

"To confer the right to examine books is one of the main purposes of granting subpoena power in the fact-finding boards. I trust that the Congress, which is the body authorized to grant such power, will do so quickly.

"In view of the public interest involved, it would be highly unfortunate if any party to a dispute should refuse to cooperate with a fact-finding board."

MINNEAPOLIS LABOR BURNS TEMPLE MORTGAGE

Minneapolis.—The mortgage on the Floyd B. Olson Labor Temple in this city was burned at an enthusiastic celebration in the auditorium when the indebtedness on the building, which was started in 1940, was paid off. The event was celebrated by a carnival jubilee grand ball.

TRUMAN SIGNS BIG UNNRA FUND MEASURE

Washington, D. C.—President Truman signed the second United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration bill, authorizing appropriation of an additional $1,350,000,000.

The bill provides funds for UNRRA spending must end in Europe by December 31, 1946, and in the Orient by March 31, 1947.

The UNRRA measure contains a House amendment under which the President is requested to seek free access of American news correspondents into countries receiving aid.

The AFL vigorously supported increased appropriations for UNRRA as a humanitarian measure.

THE NEW YEAR

By WILLIAM GREEN
President, American Federation of Labor

It is labor's determination to make 1946 the year of opportunity for America and the postwar world.

We are confident that we can solve our peacetime problems and establish in our own land a progressive economy which will provide jobs and security for all our people.

We are hopeful that in the spirit of international cooperation the United Nations will lead the world to an era of lasting peace based upon justice to all nations.

These goals will never be attained by wishful thinking. They require careful planning, hard work and, above all, the same kind of fighting determination to overcome all obstacles which brought us victory in the war.

It is inconceivable that a nation which made such tremendous sacrifices to win a war for the preservation of its democratic concepts should falter and hesitate to grapple with the far simpler problems of peace.

It is unthinkable that the national unity which welded us together into an unconquerable power for military purposes, should crumble and disintegrate so soon.

There is still a big job ahead of us. We must provide opportunities for gainful employment for all our citizens who are ready, able and needful of work. That applies especially to the returning veterans.

We must build homes for millions of our people, including ex-servicemen, who now lack a decent place to live.

We must create markets here at home for the tremendous flow of factory and farm products which will be produced as soon as reconversion is completed.

We must provide by law a full measure of social security for the American people so that the fear of poverty, the danger of destitution in old age and the risks of illness without proper medical care can be banished in our land.

The period of readjustment to a peacetime basis must not be unnecessarily prolonged. The uncertainties and the lack of confidence which grow out of the failure to develop and apply clear-cut and intelligent national policies must not be allowed to create panic and depression.

The American Federation of Labor is convinced that its program for obtaining higher standards of living for all workers is vital to the economic welfare of our country. We believe that full employment at high wages is a vital first step toward creating the purchasing power that provides fuel for our gigantic industrial and agricultural productive machine.

At the same time, the American Federation of Labor will gird all its forces and rally all the friends of labor everywhere in the coming year to resist and defeat any attempt to undermine the basic freedoms of the trade union movement and the millions of American workers who look to it for protection.

In the hope and anticipation that the great promise of the future will be fulfilled, I extend to all Americans best wishes for a happy and prosperous and peaceful New Year.

Jobs For Veterans Are Shrinking As General Unemployment Mounts

Washington, D. C.—Veterans are beginning to encounter difficulties in finding employment, with the full impact of discharges upon the labor market yet to be felt, the Department of Commerce said in its Survey of Current Business.

"Despite the fact that peak separations had not occurred and that many veterans recently released have encountered difficulties in reabsorption had begun to emerge during September and October," the article stated.

Although about 5,000,000 veterans, half of the number to be discharged, are expected to be mustered out by Jan. 1 and many servicemen have not yet joined the labor force by taking time out for adjustment to civilian life, veterans already have outnumbered the job situation will be aggravated in the next few months when discharges hit flood tide, the article stated, adding:

"The increase in the number of veterans receiving compensation for unemployment, together with the widening gap between application for and placement in jobs through local offices of United States Employment Service, reflect the difficulties veterans are having and the changed relationship of applicants and job opportunities."

Before V-J day, it was explained, discharges were offset by large-scale withdrawals from the labor market into military service so that veterans were really absorbed, while under present conditions, with the rate of releases stepped up, reconversion has reduced, at least temporarily, the demand for workers in many industries.

With Army surveys showing that at least 75 percent of the returning veterans would be job-seeking, it was concluded that the country faced a "primary problem" of developing a labor demand sufficient to provide employment for the returning veterans," along with the additional problem of finding jobs satisfactory to the veteran with previous training, newly acquired skills and general high expectations."

OPA Price Ceilings Established For 34 Scarce Building Materials

New York City—Leo F. Gentner, regional OPA administrator, announced dollars-and-cents ceiling prices on 34 major "hard" building materials for New York City and Nassau County.

Included in this list are plaster, lath, cement, bath, wallboard, clay, sewer-pipe, plywood and other structural concrete commodities.

The OPA ceiling prices for New York City and Nassau County became effective January 1, 1946, with one exception, western softwood plywood, on which ceiling prices went into effect on December 18. Prices include all charges and additions for delivery in the free-delivery zone recognized in the base-period, March, 1942.

OPA's establishment of ceiling prices on the 34 major "hard" building materials follows the agency's announced program of improving and strengthening price controls in the building construction field, and is in line with the national movement inaugurated by OPA to prevent an inflationary spiral in new housing construction. OPA's action is expected to accelerate housing construction and spur builders to provide dwelling units for millions of Americans unable to find living quarters.

CONGRESS ASKS TRUMAN TO OPEN HAVEN TO JEWS

Washington, D. C.—Both houses of Congress adopted resolutions urging President Truman to "use its good offices" with Great Britain to permit free entry of Jews into Palestine and to establish that country eventually as the Jewish National Homeland.

The resolution represents an expression of Congressional opinion and is not binding upon the President, who recently joined with Britain in appointing a joint commission to investigate the plight of displaced Jews in Europe. The AFL backed the resolution adopted by Congress.

GARMENT WORKERS DEMAND INCREASES IN WAGE RATES

Miami, Fla.—Demands for 20 percent wage increases for its 300,000 members were voiced here by the Executive Board of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

The board also authorized a sweeping campaign to organize 100,000 non-union garment workers throughout the country. Twenty-five new organizers will be appointed to do the job.

A resolution was adopted instructing all locals to extend aid to war veterans in finding jobs in the trade and to accept them as members with payment of initiation fees.